

The Body Stylist

LOS ANGELES — **Nonna Gleyzer** is firmly taking Colleen Bell through her Tuesday morning Pilates workout, chanting “again, again” in her Russian accent. As Bell, who works as a producer on “The Bold and the Beautiful” and is a regular on the Los Angeles social circuit, gracefully pulls her upper body to a 45-degree angle, she exhales audibly and says, “This is a tough one.”

It’s hard to tell if Bell is talking about the exercise move or the lithe blonde Gleyzer, L.A.’s go-to Pilates instructor. “I don’t like too many reps because it fatigues the muscles, so we constantly change directions,” Gleyzer says as she shifts Bell into another position. Gleyzer clearly practices what she preaches. At 39, she has a dancer’s body and lineless porcelain skin unadorned by makeup.

“I’m not the easiest to work with because I’m expensive and I have high expectations,” she says. “But if you want honesty, you know where you stand with me... Not to sound cocky, but I have a good track record. People come here because their time is precious and they want results. If you don’t feel different after five sessions,

then I’m probably not right for you.”

Easy to work with or not, Gleyzer is as in-demand as they come and has a client list that covers a large swath of Hollywood. In addition to training Natalie Portman for her role in “Black Swan,” there’s Kerry Washington, Debi Mazar and a lithe actor who starred in a superhero franchise who’d prefer to keep his secret identity exactly that. She’s also covered in music (Madonna, Sting and Trudie Styler), fashion (Steven Meisel), royalty (Saudi princesses) and society (Bell and Alexandra von Furstenberg).

After 45 minutes and over 100 different moves, Bell, who has been working with Gleyzer for more years than either can recall, pops into the changing room and emerges wearing a Chanel jacket, cropped jeans and Louboutin pumps.

“I need to keep my body fit for sports like surfing, because it can be life or death out there,” Bell says. “I always leave feeling stronger, more aligned and more motivated.”

But what about the women who just want to look like Portman the ballerina?

“People come to me for all kinds of things, but most of them have injuries



or they're trying to prevent them," says Gleyzer "But I'll see women who want to wear superhigh heels and look great in clothes."

Gleyzer emigrated to the United States at age 19 after the fall of the Soviet Union, and sought her Pilates certification in 1995 when she couldn't afford sessions to treat injuries she suffered as a competitive gymnast.

"When I was 6 years old, a coach came to my school and lifted my leg," she says. "It went straight up, and that was that." At age 9 she was invited to join the Russian national rhythmic gymnastics team, and later earned the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in physiology.

"She's not going to give you that one little curve in your upper arm that you want without training the other muscles around it," says Washington, who calls Gleyzer her "body stylist."

Von Furstenberg, who has practiced Pilates for 16 years and has worked with Gleyzer since she moved to Los Angeles six years ago, says, "With Nonna, you don't look like you spend all day in a gym. It's much more elegant, like, 'Oh, she was born that way.'"

Gleyzer's Eighties-style pink and green office building is the last place one would expect to bump into fancy types, even if it is on the famed Sunset Strip. But it's that anonymity factor, aided by the underground parking, private elevators and secret exit, that led her to choose the spot.

"I prefer to work with clients here because I have my custom equipment, but give me a piece of furniture and I'll give you a workout," she says. "There's always a wall or a floor, even on a private plane."

— MARCY MEDINA